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For Thanassi

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For Thanassi

*Robert Thibeaux**

Aeschylus found many truths in justice;
The god was needed, essential weakness
Required a higher good, an artifice,
A law: and so we searched; our uniqueness

Common to any areopagus,
To any people of lusts and commerce,
One necessity, a god among us,
Wisdom's revenance, if our laws rehearse.

And so from Athen's rock bearing one gift
You came; giving freely as the gods do,
Departing as gods depart. Shall we lift
Eyes above to follow you, to find you?

Look there, Louisiana, for his place;
Sophia's code, the wings of Samothrace.
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The Thanassiad

Beware of Greeks bearing gifts . . . Virgil, the Aeneid
Captive Greece captured her rude conqueror . . . Horace

Those bearing gifts: an old Roman slander
Disproved by the very poem, now quoted,
Prelude to the Latin echo noted,

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* Robert Thibeaux, Member, Carver Darden, New Orleans, LA. Like the front of the LSU law school building or the Pantheon in its day, Thanassi was an embodiment of the continuing legacy of classical Greek thought and achievement in modern society. He loved her poets, as he loved Louisiana, his adopted home. We in Louisiana will forever be enriched by this student of the Academy 2500 years after its founding. These works pay tribute to his achievement, to the culture into which he was born, that he loved, and to the rich gifts of wisdom—*sophia*—that he brought from the land of Greece to our state's Civil Code. Like Virgil himself in the Aeneid, we can never stop hearing these echoes from ancient Greece, this Homer, in the Greek, Athanassios—the immortal one. The wings of the Victory of Samothrace, indeed.

They, Circe's bound prisoners: command her
To set them free? She did: Alexander,
Fellow conqueror, marked his demoted
With the badge of libraries, promoted
The bondage of Parthenos: her world, her
Service, if mind creates mountains and sea,
Those mountains and sea, our choice to govern,
Our service, to you, Thannasi: the modes
Of freedom's discipline, its odyssey
With you among the *barbarum*; we learn,
Like the Romans, law's origins, law's odes.
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